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SEEKING LAND SHELLS IN CUBA

—
BY EDWIN E. HAND
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The writer is in doubt whether to say "*Seeking* Land Shells in Cuba" or *Finding* Dr. Carlos de la Torre. But since the two subjects are practically synonymous, let it stand *as is*.

D. L. Emery, of St. Petersburg, Florida, commanded E. E. Hand of Chicago to park his car in his garage and join him and H. E. Lowe of Long Beach, California for a trip to Cuba. All necessary arrangements being duly perfected, three enthusiastic conchologists embarked on a sturdy boat at Port Tampa on July 8th bound for the port of Havana.

Next day found us located in a hotel home and 'phoning to Dr. Carlos de la Torre. A seven-passenger Kissel Car called for us next morning and we met the King of Cuban Conchology. He is fully worthy to be placed with Arango and Poey; for his knowledge of Cuban shells is simply stupendous—unbelievable. And even better than this he is so full of "the milk of human kindness."

We had numberless examples of his brotherly love for three strangers—yes, strangers except for the shell bond. But Charles Torrey Simpson told us an incident which nicely illustrates Dr. Torre's bubbling, overflowing friendliness. Mr. Simpson said, that Dr. Torre took him by both hands (or was

it shoulders?) and said, "You are Charles Torrey and I am Carlos Torre. We are brothers." And though our names are different we were treated just the same.

Our car stopped first at a tropical-fruit stand, where the host loaded up with good things too numerous to mention and treated us to our first green cocoanut milk sucked through a straw a la ice-cream soda. We also sampled mangoes and mama sapotes.

Then we drove out toward Loma de Candela and the sharp-eyed collector ordered the chauffeur to stop the car. Up and down that highway arched with century-old Ceiba and Ficus trees, we hastened knocking *Liguus* from the trunks and lower branches and seeking them in crevices where they were hiding. This was a treat never to be forgotten.

Then on again to the stone fences for *Urocoptis*, and further, at Guanabacoa a species of *Pleurodonte* planted by a collector years ago, having been brought from eastern Cuba. It may be worth while to say here that Dr. de la Torre had heard of this place, but had never visited it. So the quest was as exciting to him as to the rest of us. We drove up near the corner of the jail yard and the Doctor explained to some boys what he was looking for. The boys use these in playing games and some one was sure to know where to get them, but they knew nothing about it. Then on the diagonally opposite corner the same question was put to another group. Immediately one lad said, "Si, señor," and away he ran. In less time than it takes to tell it—he returned with a pocket full of the "caracolas"—*Pleurodonte marginella* var. Soon five grown men were scratching around a chicken yard to the bewilderment of all the hens. But we got a goodly mess and were soon homeward bound. We were about forty miles away from Havana. On the way out we stopped at a wayside inn for refreshments and returning, found at the same place an elegant course dinner, Spanish style, which the Doctor had quietly ordered as a surprise to us. This is a fair sample of all our days with Dr. Carlos de la Torre.

On these auto-collecting trips we ran to the coast betimes for Cerions, at Mariel, *Cerion johnsoni marielinum* galore, *C. chrysalis*, *C. salvatori*, etc., by the cigar-box full.

One day we went alone to Camoa or Jamaica and, though it was very hot and we spent a lot of our valuable time wiping sweat from our brows and "specs", we caught many *Chondropoma*, *Proserpina*, *Urocoptis*, *Eutrochatella*, *Megalomastoma*, *Helicina*, etc.

Over to Matanzas, via Hershey R. R. (yes, the chocolate man) we journeyed. Here we spent two days. One in a car furnished by Doctor Torre's brother Salvatore, collecting out by Belamar Caves and Point Sabanilla and the other with one of Dr. Torre's student assistants who took us through the Yumuri valley and Abra de Figueroa. Here *Chondropoma irradians* gave us a real thrill. It is a very beautiful species with wide flaring ruby-rayed lip. We found a few of variety *mahoganyi*—solid mahogany and well named. Many *Liguus*, on our return, rewarded our weary footsteps.

We did some marine collecting around Havana, finding *Littorina*, *Neritina*, *Tectarius*, *Fissurella*, etc. Our mentor, D. L. Emery, was poking about the Littorinas at the foot of the Prado, when he found amongst the plain brown, some speckled ones. We shall never forget the excitement six little speckled shells caused the good Dr. Torre. He looked at them carefully and exclaimed, "This is a new Littorina. This does not belong to Cuba. You are fooling me, Emery; you brought this from Tampa. A new land shell would be not surprising, but a new marine!" We all agreed it should be *emeryi* and rejoiced therein. But Doctor de la Torre was not to be caught napping and began to dig. In a few days he told us that he found, in a Porto-Rican list, undescribed and unfigured, a name that just fitted—*guttata*. After diligent searching by all of us and a student assistant, Mr. Lowe found two more.

At Guyabel we found a few of the rare *Varicellas*. They are carnivorous and feed on the *Urocoptis*, literally eating them alive.

We entrained for Guane, end of Railroad west, where Doctor Torre's letter brought us a fine reception and guides. We decided first to try for *Urocoptis elliotti* (See NAUT., May, 1908), so, a guide who knew where Bishop's Cave was located, took us there. We found no *elliotti* nor any place where we had to hang

on with all fours and pick with our mouth. So we decided to do some exploring ourselves. We worked around the other side of the Sierra de Guane and became "all tuckered out." Emery and Hand were resting but the indefatigable Lowe was high on the mountain side. We two had agreed that we wouldn't climb anymore for all the *U. elliotti* in Cuba. Soon Lowe called, "Found *elliotti* and lots of 'em!" We waited not, but hastened and gathered to our heart's content. And when we got back to the hotel and looked them over we decided they were not *elliotti*! Our guide had a horse to ford us back over the river. He took three at a time and made two trips. There were five of us and one sat down flat in the mud as we unloaded. But what did we care; we were having fun!

The next day we decided to go again, alone, and see what we could find. We went where no one had ever been collecting before and Dr. Torre says we found a new species. These will be worked up later.

One day, at Mendoza in the Sierra de Paso Real and the caves in the Mogote back of the railroad station, gave us a fine lot of "*dautzenbergiana*" and some new ones. We were all tired out again and went down to the station to wait for the train. We tried to buy a ticket but they refused to sell. They tried to tell us the train was two hours late. But beyond eats, drinks and sleeps, our Spanish was a negligible quantity. But we finally got the news and hiked the four kilometers to our hotel in one hour. We took the train back to Pinar del Rio, and a wonderful bus ride of about 18 miles brought us to Vinales. This was the finest mountain scenery yet and the Mogotes and Tumbadero looked magnificent. But the hotel, to which the Doctor had directed us, had gone out of business and we had the most primitive quarters. The one-story, tile-roofed, dirt-floored dining room gave easy access to the shed in back where the caballeros put their horses, leading them in and out through the dining room. We spent two days here, had fine collecting, and wanted to stay longer but our time was going so fast we had to be moving. We returned to Havana and spent two days with the Doctor's duplicates. Dr. Torre was amused that the very thing we sought in Guane, we missed. "But," said he,

"I have plenty of *elliotti* and will give you each a set." And so it was. And he gave us sets and sets, and we had to leave before he got through. But most highly prized of all he gave each of us a book entitled, "Geografia de la Isla de Cuba por Alfredo M. Aguayo y Carlos de la Torre y Huerta," and inscribed, "A guide for your future excursions and a souvenir from your friend, Dr. Carlos de la Torre." It is a book of 210 pages with many illustrations and is used in the schools of Cuba. Nearly all the places we visited are described and pictured.

In closing we give a few lasting impressions: The royal palms, dominant everywhere, the poverty of the people in the country, poor huts, dirt floors, naked children, pigs tied up to graze, drinking water hauled up from the river in a barrel and often standing in the sunshine. The kindness and hospitality of everyone, trying their best to do all in their power to guide and help you, "Americano" though you be. The highways are arched with acacias, ceibas, ficus, etc., underneath which your car glides through a shady tunnel; but from a height as you look back, you see the embowered road, a huge green serpent winding through the landscape.

It was a wonderful trip and long to be remembered, but we know three Americanos who are glad to be back in the U. S. A. And we all have his promise that Dr. Carlos de la Torre will visit us next time he comes hither. This promise and the shells we have will be an inspiration to us for years to come.

September 1, 1926.

THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE SUPERSPECIFIC GROUPS OF *CORBULA*
IN THE LOWER MIOCENE OF FLORIDA

BY JULIA GARDNER¹

Bruguière in 1798 published in the *Encyclopédie Méthodique*, a plate of eighteen figures which he headed *Corbula*. He used no specific names but his figures have been identified as follows:

¹ Published by permission of the Director U. S. Geol. Survey.

² Bruguière, J. G.: *Tableau Encyclopédique et Méthodique*, Paris, 1797, 1798.

